Centessa Pharmaceuticals Announces Appointment of Stephen Kanes, MD PhD, as Chief Medical Officer

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BOSTON and LONDON, Jan. 08, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Centessa Pharmaceuticals plc (Nasdaq: CNTA), a clinical stage pharmaceutical company with a mission to discover, develop and ultimately deliver medicines that are transformational for patients, today announced the appointment of Stephen Kanes MD PhD, as Chief Medical Officer (CMO). Dr. Kanes is a neuropsychiatrist, with a career in neuroscience, clinical psychiatry, and neuroscience drug development spanning more than 30 years.

“Centessa is rapidly advancing a potential best-in-class and first-in-class portfolio of orexin receptor 2 (OX2R) agonists with a robust series of clinical milestones anticipated this year,” said Saurabh Saha MD PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Centessa. “Steve is a great addition to our team and brings an exceptional set of skills in the design and execution of clinical programs across key therapeutic areas, including neurology and psychiatry. His expertise will be invaluable as we continue to progress our novel OX2R agonists for the treatment of sleep-wake, neurological, neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders.”

“Orexin agonists are one of the most exciting emerging areas of therapeutic science, and Centessa’s potential best-in-class OX2R agonists represent an extraordinary opportunity to address unmet patient needs across multiple therapeutic areas,” said Stephen Kanes, MD PhD, Chief Medical Officer. “With Phase 2a clinical studies of ORX750 now underway, it’s an exciting time to be joining Centessa. I look forward to working with the team and contributing to the success of the Company’s growing OX2R agonist franchise.”

Dr. Kanes served as Chief Medical Officer of Sage Therapeutics from 2013 to 2021, where he led the successful clinical development of ZULRESSO® (brexanolone), the first-ever treatment approved for Postpartum Depression (PPD), along with the buildout of the development organization and Sage Therapeutics' broad neuroscience portfolio. Most recently, Dr. Kanes was Chief Executive Officer of EmbarkNeuro, a neuroscience focused biotech company. Earlier in his career, Dr. Kanes was Executive Director in Clinical Development in the Inflammation, Neuroscience and Respiratory therapeutic areas at AstraZeneca, and a faculty member of the University of Pennsylvania Department of Psychiatry where he explored both the genetics and physiology of severe mental illness. He has authored or co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications in behavioral neuroscience, behavioral pharmacology, genetics, brain imaging, clinical trials, and health economics and serves as an ad hoc reviewer for multiple journals including *Neuropsychopharmacology* and *The American Journal of Medical Genetics and Biological Psychiatry*. Dr. Kanes received his BA from the University of Pennsylvania in the Biological Basis of Behavior and both his PhD in Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology and MD from the Stony Brook University Renaissance School of Medicine. He completed his psychiatry residency at Yale-New Haven Medical Center and a neuropsychiatry postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania.

About Centessa Pharmaceuticals
Centessa Pharmaceuticals plc is a clinical-stage pharmaceutical company that aims to discover and develop medicines that are transformational for patients. We are developing potential best-in-class orexin receptor 2 (OX2R) agonists intended to be orally administered for the treatment of sleep-wake disorders including narcolepsy type 1 (NT1), narcolepsy type 2 (NT2) and idiopathic hypersomnia (IH), and excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) in neurological, neurodegenerative, and psychiatric conditions. We also anticipate that our OX2R agonists may have utility in treating impaired attention, cognitive deficits, fatigue, and other symptoms. Our lead OX2R agonist, ORX750, is in Phase 2 clinical trials for NT1, NT2 and IH. ORX750 has not been approved by the FDA or any other regulatory authority. Centessa’s proprietary LockBody technology platform aims to redefine immuno-oncology treatment for patients with cancer. LockBody drug candidates are designed to selectively drive potent effector function activity to the tumor micro-environment (TME) while avoiding systemic toxicity.

Forward Looking Statements
This press release contains forward-looking statements. These statements may be identified by words such as “may,” “might,” “will,” “could,” “would,” “should,” “expect,” “intend,” “plan,” “objective,” “anticipate,” “believe,” “estimate,” “predict,” “potential,” “continue,” “ongoing,” “aim,” “seek,” and variations of these words or similar expressions that are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Any such statements in this press release that are not statements of historical fact may be deemed to be forward-looking statements, including statements related to the Company’s ability to discover and develop transformational medicines for patients; its expectations for executing on the Company's pipeline; its expectations on its anticipated cash runway; the timing of commencement of new studies or clinical trials or clinical and preclinical data related to ORX750, ORX142, ORX489 and other OX2R agonist molecules, LB101, other LockBody candidates, and the LockBody technology platform; its ability to identify, screen, recruit and maintain a sufficient number of or any subjects in its existing and anticipated studies or clinical trials of ORX750, ORX142, ORX489 and other OX2R agonist molecules, LB101 and any other LockBody candidates; its expectations on executing its research and clinical development plans and the timing thereof; its expectations as to the potential results and impact of each of its clinical programs and trials; the Company’s ability to differentiate ORX750, ORX142, ORX489 and other OX2R agonist molecules, LB101, other LockBody candidates from other treatment options; the development, design and therapeutic potential of ORX750, ORX142, ORX489 and other OX2R agonist molecules, LB101, other LockBody candidates and the LockBody technology platform; and regulatory matters, including the timing and likelihood of success of obtaining regulatory clearance, obtaining authorizations to initiate or continue clinical trials. Any forward-looking statements in this press release are based on our current expectations, estimates, assumptions and projections only as of the date of this release and are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially and adversely from those set forth in or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, risks related to the safety and tolerability profile of our product candidates; our ability to identify, screen and recruit a sufficient number of or any subjects in our existing and anticipated new studies or clinical trials of ORX750, ORX142, ORX489 or LB101 or within anticipated timelines; our expectations relating to the clinical trials of ORX750, including the predicted timing of enrollment, the predicted efficacious doses of ORX750 and our ability to successfully conduct our clinical development of ORX750, our ability to protect and maintain our intellectual property position; business (including commercial viability), regulatory, economic and competitive risks, uncertainties, contingencies and assumptions about the Company; risks inherent in developing product candidates and technologies; future results from our ongoing and planned clinical trials; our ability to obtain adequate financing, including through our financing facility with Oxford Finance, to fund our planned clinical trials and other expenses; trends in the industry; the legal and regulatory framework for the industry, including the receipt and maintenance of clearances to conduct or continue clinical testing; our operating costs and use of cash, including cash runway, cost of development activities and conducting clinical trials, future expenditures risks; the risk that any one or more of our product candidates will not be successfully developed and/or commercialized; the risk that the historical results of preclinical studies or clinical studies will not be predictive of future results in ongoing or future studies; economic risks to the United States and United Kingdom banking systems; and geo-political risks such as the Russia-Ukraine war or the Middle East conflicts. These

and other risks concerning our programs and operations are described in additional detail in our Annual Report on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, and our other reports, which are on file with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). We explicitly disclaim any obligation to update any forward-looking statements except to the extent required by law.

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